



## *Coconino County Sheriff's Office*

*Bill Pribil, Sheriff*

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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**For Immediate Release  
Date: December 8, 2009**

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### **Multi Agency Response Rescues Family of Five**

Flagstaff, AZ- Coconino County Sheriff's Deputies, Coconino County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Members who were assisted by the Gila County Sheriff's Office and the Arizona Public Service Company located and rescued a family of five who were Christmas tree hunting in the Forest lakes area early this morning.

The Coconino County Sheriff's Office Received a report of a stranded and over due party from the Gila County Sheriff's Office 911 Center who received the initial report from the victim's sister. Investigation revealed that a 19 year old pregnant female, her 21 year old finance, her 1 year old son and her five and three year old nephews left Payson Arizona on a Christmas Tree hunting trip on Monday December 7, 2009. She purchased a Christmas tree permit at the Heber Ranger Station at 12:00 noon. At approximately 03:15 p.m. the victim called her sister who lives in Mesa Arizona to report that their vehicle was stuck however they were in the process of freeing it. Numerous efforts to contact the victim via her cell phone were unsuccessful.

Coconino County Sheriff's Deputies assigned to Forest Lakes began the initial search. Search and rescue volunteers responded with a snow cat from Flagstaff however the equipment was delayed in Holbrook due to highway closures. Personnel from the Gila County Sheriff's Office and the Arizona Public Service Company in two separate snow cats searched Forest Service Road 300 (Rim Road) where the stranded victims were believed to be. Personnel aboard the two snow cats located the victims who were still with their vehicle at approximately 4:30 a.m.

Although all five victims were cold and hungry they did not require medical attention, and were transported back to their home in Payson. According to the victim the driver lost control of the vehicle causing it to slide off the road and into an embankment.

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